



Summary- Alaskan Inuit Food Sovereignty Initiative

Anchorage Steering Committee Meeting

July 20-21, 2021



The Alaskan Inuit Food Sovereignty Initiative is led by a 17-member Steering Committee, comprised of Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC) Alaska Member Organizations, collaborating co-management organizations, as well as an elder, youth, and hunter representative.

Doreen Fog-Leavitt, **Inupiat Community of the Arctic Slope**

Willie Goodwin, **Maniilaq Association**

Brandon Ahmasuk, **Kawerak, Incorporated**

Jennifer Hooper, **Association of Village Council Presidents**

Nicole Kanayurak, **North Slope Borough**

Walter Sampson, **Northwest Arctic Borough**

Marvin Okitkun, **Alaska Beluga Whale Committee**

Arnold Brower, Jr., **Alaska Eskimo Whaling Commission**

Taqulik Hepa, **Alaska Migratory Bird Co-Management Council**

Millie Hawley, **Alaska Nannut Co-Management Council**

Vera Metcalf, **Eskimo Walrus Commission**

Billy Adams, **Ice Seal Committee**

James Nicori, **Kuskokwim River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission**

James Stotts, **ICC Alaska President**

Merlin Koonooka, **ICC Alaska Elder Board Member**

Chris Apassingok, **Youth representative**

Thomas Napageak, Jr., **Hunter representative from the North Slope Region**

This report summarizes the outcomes of the Anchorage Steering Committee meeting.

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Executive Summary

The Alaskan Inuit Food Sovereignty Initiative, hereinafter referred to as Initiative, is a three-year effort carried out in collaboration with ICC Alaska member organizations and members of co-management organizations. It is led by a 17-member Alaskan Inuit Steering Committee comprised of representatives from our four regions. The Initiative was a direct call to action from Alaskan Inuit and follows up on ICC Alaska's earlier work of the Alaska Native Review Commission, as published in VILLAGE JOURNEY. It also follows up on the Alaskan Inuit Food Security Conceptual Framework, the ICC Wildlife Management Summit, and was carried out alongside the Food Sovereignty and Self-governance project.

The ICC Wildlife Management Summit brought Inuit together from across Inuit Nunaat in 2017 and resulted in the creation of a Circumpolar Inuit Wildlife Management Committee and a Circumpolar Inuit Wildlife Network. The Committee is the interface between Inuit wildlife management experts, groups, committees, and organizations and will work to recognize and build onto existing bi-lateral and multi-lateral relationships, mechanisms, and agreements at the international level to advance Inuit food sovereignty. The Committee and Network aims to unify Inuit to collectively promote, develop, and maintain our rights to self-determination, culture, food sovereignty, and sustainable use of our food resources across national and international borders throughout Inuit Nunaat (homelands).

The goal of the Initiative is to unify Alaskan Inuit by starting a collective movement towards food sovereignty by developing an Alaskan Inuit Food Sovereignty Management Action Plan that advances traditional resource management practices. Through the Initiative, we convened three regional meetings and one statewide Summit. The Summit was the centerpiece of the Initiative and brought together Inuit from the North Slope, Northwest Arctic, Bering Strait, and Yukon-Kuskokwim regions of Alaska to hear directly from community members on a pathway forward to set the framework for the Alaskan Inuit Food Sovereignty Management Action Plan.

The Action Plan will empower our people to seek reform and justice as we collectively work towards securing access and management rights over our traditional food resources and to create long-term systematic and policy change that will advance food sovereignty and benefit Inuit communities throughout our four regions of Alaska.

Through this Initiative, we hope to gain recognition of and respect for our rights to access and manage our wildlife and other resources in Alaska to ensure that we can progress towards this collective aspiration for international collaboration of wildlife management.



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Special Acknowledgement

Special acknowledgement goes out to ICC Alaska member organizations: North Slope Borough, Arctic Slope Regional Corporation, Inupiat Community of the Arctic Slope, NANA Regional Corporation, Northwest Arctic Borough, Maniilaq Association, Bering Straits Native Corporation, Kawerak, Incorporated, the Association of Village Council Presidents, and the partnering co-management organizations: Alaska Beluga Whale Committee, Alaska Eskimo Whaling Commission, Alaska Migratory Bird Co-Management Council, Alaska Nannut Co-Management Council, Eskimo Walrus Commission, Ice Seal Committee, Kuskokwim River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission who supported and committed to this collective Inuit-led effort.

A special thank you goes out to all of the Steering Committee members for your time and commitment to serve on behalf of your regional communities/the Initiative's project beneficiaries, who live within 83 Alaskan Inuit communities that span across our four regions of Alaska.



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Citation

This report reflects the Knowledge and perspectives of Alaskan Inuit leaders, resource managers, elders, and youth. The report should be cited as: Inuit Circumpolar Council Alaska. 2021. Summary Report: *Alaskan Inuit Food Sovereignty Initiative Steering Committee Meeting*. Anchorage, Alaska.

The Anchorage Steering Committee meeting was facilitated by Vernae Angnaboogok with assistance from Eilene Adams, as well as facilitation design support from Jered Stewart at cultureflo. This report was written by Vernae Angnaboogok.



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Taqulik Hepa, Jennifer Hooper, James Nicori, Merlin Koonooka, Willie Goodwin, and Tiahna Capelle

Meeting Participants

The meeting was attended by 14 of the 17 Alaskan Inuit Steering Committee members, with the Alaska Eskimo Whaling Commission and Ice Seal Committee members unable to make it. See below for a list of participants.

Alaskan Inuit Food Sovereignty Steering Committee Members Present:

Doreen Fogg-Leavitt	Inupiat Community of the Arctic Slope
Willie Goodwin	Maniilaq Association
Walter Sampson	Northwest Arctic Borough
Brandon Ahmasuk	Kawerak, Incorporated
Jennifer Hooper	Association of Village Council Presidents
Nicole Kanayurak	North Slope Borough
Marvin Okitkun	Alaska Beluga Whale Committee
Taqulik Hepa	Alaska Migratory Birds Co-Management Council
Millie Hawley	Alaska Nannut Co-management Council
Vera Metcalf	Eskimo Walrus Commission
James Nicori	Kuskokwim River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission
James Stotts	ICC Alaska President
Merlin Koonooka	ICC Alaska Elder Board Member
Chris Apassingok	Youth Steering Committee Member

Others present:

Tiahna Capelle	Northwest Arctic Region Youth
Eilene Adams	ICC Alaska Project Assistant
Kelly Eningowuk	ICC Alaska Executive Director
Vernae Angnaboogok	ICC Alaska Project Director

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Summary

The third and final Initiative Steering Committee meeting was held on July 20-21, 2021 in Anchorage Alaska. The objectives of this meeting were to **1)** Share the 4 regional Action Plans; **2)** Pull together priorities and recommendations from the regional Action Plans into one collective Alaskan Inuit Food Sovereignty Management Action Plan; and **3)** Set next steps for the Steering Committee to prepare for the next phase – Implementation.

Willie Goodwin opened the meeting with a prayer. The Steering Committee provided region updates and expressed their gratitude to be able to come together again for an in-person meeting to finalize the Action Plan that had been under development over the last year. Each region shared their regional Action Plans and expressed that more community outreach and discussion is needed to further shape up the regional Action Plans to prepare for Implementation.

The main focus of this meeting was to bring together the strategies and recommendations from each region's Action Plan into one collective Alaskan Inuit Food Sovereignty Management Action Plan.

Outcomes:

- Completed final draft of our collective Alaskan Inuit Food Sovereignty Management Action Plan
- Collected photo and video assets for the final Initiative promotional video

Shared priorities Across Regions

- Importance of holding an in-person regional workshop to engage more community members to build off of their draft regional Action Plan
- Communicate with one voice and disseminate strong, consistent messaging throughout communities
- Identify leads and work together with the many regional and village organizations to bring everyone on board and utilize our strengths to our full potential
- Raise up the next generation of Inuit leaders, lawyers, biologists, etc.
- Put forward Inuit customary laws management practices
- Identify short and long term goals
- Draft a white paper centered on understanding how to leverage Indigenous rights to advance our food sovereignty
- Develop protocols and guidelines to share with management agencies so they can understand how to meaningfully engage us and our Knowledge
- Recognize the land owners in the region and who we need to work with

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Final Action Plan Strategy and Recommendations

The Steering Committee deliberated over two days to pull together a final draft Alaskan Inuit Food Sovereignty Management Action Plan that carries forward the priorities and recommendations that align across the four regions. They stressed that through a unified approach, we are stronger.

The Steering Committee worked hard to ensure the Action Plan was broad and flexible enough to make room for regional processes that need to happen in follow up to the finalization of this shared Action Plan.

The Action Plan includes four strategic recommendations to advance our food sovereignty:

1. Mobilize through a Unified Approach
2. Advocate for meaningful roles for Inuit in Wildlife Management
3. Ensure management decisions utilize Indigenous Knowledge and science
4. Align regulatory frameworks with Inuit management practices to achieve adaptive, holistic management

Each strategic recommendation has an objective and desired outcome as well as a series of action steps that will guide us through the next phase of the Initiative – to implement the Action Plan.

Conclusion

Steering Committee members reaffirmed their solidarity and commitment to move forward as one to advance and protect our food sovereignty. Over the last 3 years, we organized and unified Inuit across the North Slope, Northwest, Bering Strait, and Yukon-Kuskokwim regions of Alaska to come together in support of a common position on food sovereignty – a commitment to work towards securing access and management rights over our traditional food resources, to advocate for long-term systematic and policy changes that will advance our food sovereignty. The Action Plan plants the seed for this work to continue into the next phase of Implementation and gives us direction to collectively advance our food sovereignty.

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Appendix: Anchorage Steering Committee Meeting Agenda

MEETING OBJECTIVES:

1. Share regional Action Plans
2. Review and approve overarching Alaskan Inuit Food Sovereignty Management Action Plan
3. Set tactical next steps for Steering Committee to prepare for the Implementation phase

DAY #1 Tuesday, July 20, 2021

9:00 Welcome & Overview

- Opening prayer
- Announce John will be taking photos and doing interviews. Asking for 2 people from each region to be interviewed.
- Review agenda

9:15 Ice Breaker

9:30 Reflect on Regional Action Plans

- North Slope
- Northwest
- Bering Strait
- Yukon-Kuskokwim

10:30 Break

10:45 Presentation & Discussion of the Overarching Action Plan

12:00 Lunch

1:30 Work through Collective Action Planning Steps

3:00 Break

3:15 Preview of Action Plan by Element Agency

4:00 Celebration & recognition of all the hard work

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DAY #2 Wednesday July 21, 2021

- 9:00 Welcome & Introduction of Day 2
- 9:15 Day 1 Feedback & Discussion on Overarching Action Plan
- 10:15 Ice Breaker
- 10:30 Break
- 10:30 Final Review & Approval Process
- 12:00 Lunch
- 1:30 Prepare for Implementation of the Action Plan
- 3:00 Break
- 4:00 Closing Ceremony